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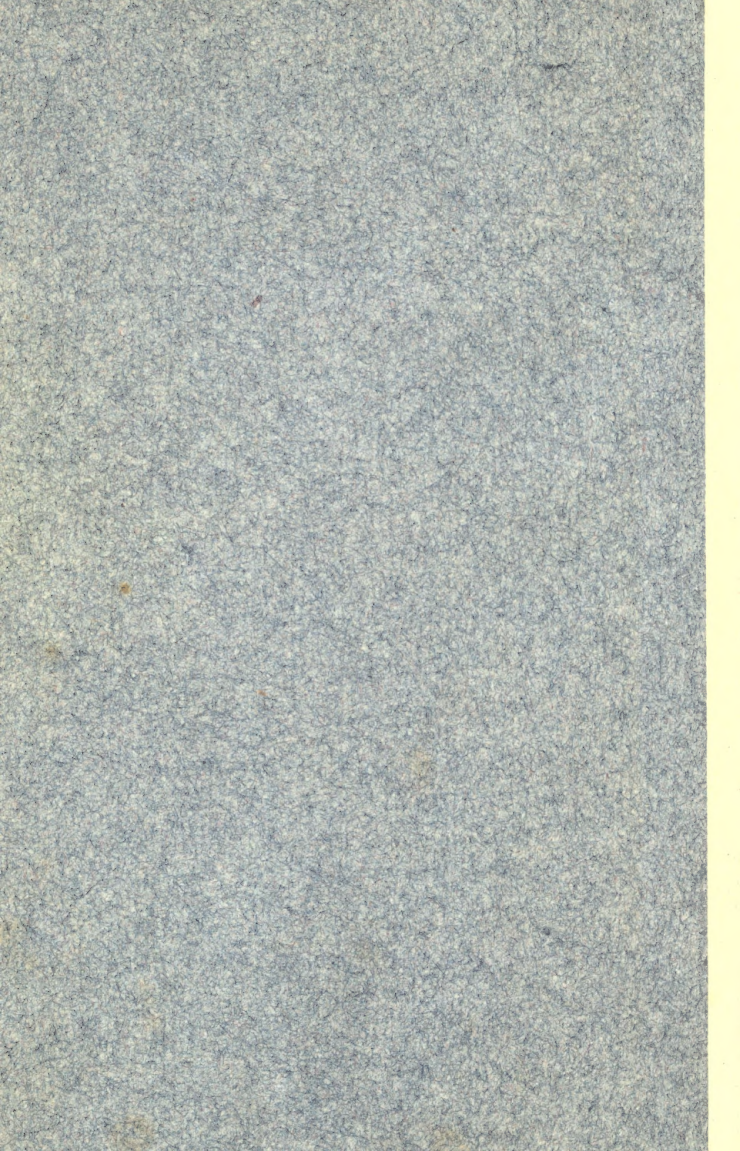
Our National Church:

A S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
A N N I V E R S A R Y
S E R V I C E O F T H E
Church of England Institute
OCTOBER 15, 1902, BY

REV. J. DE SOYRES

RECTOR ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.



Our National Church

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF THE

Church of England Institute

AT TRINITY CHURCH, ST. JOHN, N. B.

OCTOBER 15TH, 1902

BY

REVEREND JOHN DE SOYRES

Rector of St. John's Church

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Dedicated

TO

REV. W. H. DE VEBER, M.A.

CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
SOMETIME RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

With Affection and Respect.

**“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem :
they shall prosper that love thee.”**

PSALM CXXII: 6.

AMONG the great contrasts between the religion of the Old and the New Dispensation, there is nothing more striking than the ardent patriotism which permeates Judaism, and the large cosmopolitan spirit which is proclaimed in the Gospel. Jehovah is God of Israel ; He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; He chose Israel for His inheritance, and the heathen are His foes, and aliens to His redemption. The place of His Holiness is Zion : the prayer of the righteous is, “*Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem.*” On the other hand, Jesus proclaims the redemption of the “other sheep, not of this fold.” They are equally to be united at last in the One Flock, under One Shepherd. To St. Paul there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all.” But it would be an imperfect and inaccurate view which confined the characteristics of the two dispensations to this one apparent contrast. It is in the Old Testament that the grandest declaration of God’s universal grace is declared, in the words, “All souls are mine.” Rahab and Ruth, heroines of the Gentiles, in their histories, and connection with the

divine genealogy, pointed out a lesson which the future was to learn. And so the New Testament, while vastly widening the horizon, and declaring that sacrifice and circumcision are fulfilled and superseded, yet does practically recognize the existence of separate Christian communities, with different gifts, needs and weaknesses, stirs them to noble emulation in good works, and proclaims ultimate reunion as a glorious ideal of a distant future. Many will recollect how admirably this is illustrated by Bishop Lightfoot in his classical treatise upon the Christian Ministry. He shows how, ideally, the Kingdom of Christ has no sacred days, no sanctuaries, no sacerdotal system. Yet, practically, all these things, ministry, churches, and appointed days, are found necessary, and receive Divine sanction. Still the Apostles never lost sight of the ideal in their teaching, and their principle should be ours.

Accordingly there is a two-fold aspect to be considered: the universal and the particular, the Church Catholic, nobly defined in the Bidding Prayer as the "congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world," and the Church National, whether established as in the mother-land, or claiming the allegiance of her members by sanctions no less solemn, and memories no less illustrious. There was a time when it would have been the duty of an Anglican preacher to dwell

with force upon the universal aspect of the Church, when bigotry was rampant, and political interest fanned the flame of theological rivalry.

But now another danger is in the air. There is a prevailing fashion of vague and sentimental utterance, which confuses between the ideal of unity and the facts of historical evolution, which makes its adherents apologetic for their creed and their church, indistinct in their reason for existence, invertebrate in their theology.

My brethren, the time has come for a protest against this. We, who fully recognize that God's Holy Spirit has worked, and works now, through other communities ; we who thank God for the souls that have been gained by them, the misery redressed, the light communicated ; we who reverence their piety, respect their learning, admire their energy (often far greater than our own), yet we have our own allegiance, our own loyalty to the Church in which we were baptized, in which we live, and in which we hope to die : "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee.*"

That was a noble book written by Bishop Jewell in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and often placed then in the churches, by the side of the Bible. It was his Apology for the Church of England. But that title expressed, as its real meaning implies, no shrinking excuse, no plea for indulgence, but a

confident and lofty defence against misconception and false accusation. He vindicated the Church of England as scriptural, as primitive, but also as reformed, throwing off mediæval accretions, and filled with the life which the Holy Spirit imparts. He vindicated her ministry as apostolical; he demonstrated that her services drew inspiration from primitive models, and were cleansed from vain repetitions and superstitious corruptions. But one plea he did not utter, and that was on behalf of the national character of the Church of England. And yet that is a potent appeal to those who recognize God's hand in national character, national development, and national life. English Church history is English history, as you read its glowing pages. It was a landmark of national history when Augustine landed in Kent, when the great Abbey of Westminster was founded in 1065, when English kings protested against Roman encroachments, and Magna Carta registered the Church's freedom; when Wyclif lit the candle of reform, and when the wise teachings of Dean Colet and his friends prepared for a fuller and more durable reformation. It was a landmark of English history when Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer witnessed at the stake for the truths they had taught; when the work of reconstruction was founded by Archbishop Parker, and slowly completed at the Savoy Conference.

These memories are not mere historical facts, and still less matters of sentiment only. They should strengthen our allegiance, and inspire our enthusiasm. The Prime Minister of England lately used the expression "subordinate patriotism" to describe the feeling which makes a Scotchman love all things Scotch, and, as he might have added, a Canadian and an Australian cling to things Canadian and Australian.

So, although in our creed we profess allegiance only to the Universal Church, our hearts are not debarred from including our own Communion also. In the English Cathedrals and Universities the Bidding Prayer before sermon begins: "*Let us pray for Christ's Holy Catholic Church — that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world;*" but then it adds: "*especially for that pure and reformed part of it established within these realms.*" So we, believing in the Catholic Church, longing for her realization, praying for that unity that shall fulfil the prayer of Jesus Christ, yet we also pray for our National Church: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*"

We do not depend upon memories of the past only. We can recall events in these latter days testifying that the power of the Church of England, her influence as an active force for goodness, has

not diminished. It was just ten years ago when a great strike of the North of England colliers began. There was a panic in all England just as we have lately experienced : fears that a coal famine would ensue. More than a hundred thousand colliers were on strike ; manufactures on the rivers Tyne and Wear were practically suspended. Then the late Bishop of Durham (Dr. Westcott, scholar and theologian), offered himself as mediator. Representatives of both sides, colliery owners and workmen, met at Auckland Castle, and a compromise was agreed upon which has not since been impaired.

And our National Church needs all her power at the present crisis. It has been well said that the Church has never been without a crisis in any period. The crisis of party is past, for the true leaders of thought are striving now to comprehend and appreciate one another, and to teach their followers to do likewise. But we are confronted by the question of the Bible, the necessary re-statement of some Biblical theories in the light of scientific conclusions which can be no longer ignored. Let the watchword of all future teaching to the young, as to the old, be that our Bible is the union of Divine and Human elements, so ordered by the Holy Spirit, so to be accepted by ourselves ; that questions of date and authorship are questions for scholars, and in no sense touch the doctrine of

Inspiration. It is with the Bible as with the Person of our Lord : the infidel says, "all human," the uninstructed Christian says, "all Divine," the Catholic Creed says, "perfect God and perfect Man." Let timid panic cease ; let our clergy and our laity give themselves to reading, not to fantastic speculations about theories unproved and unprovable, but with the aids now within reach of all, to search those Holy Scriptures, and through them hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.

But hardly less important than the Scriptural question is the duty of the Church to study social questions. The Church in this new century must face these questions, and endeavour to solve them, unless she is content to pose as the religion of respectability, and the consoler of the wealthy. We have yet much to learn, much to gain, before it can be said of us, as it was said of our Master, that "the common people heard him gladly." And yet it is not for the interests of one class, even of the poor, that the Church must strive, but for the interests of the whole community—those who ought to be portions of Christ's mystical Body. When we think of these crying needs, of the Church's great responsibilities, of the Church's Divine support, we can but utter the cry :

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee."

And so our spiritual patriotism can draw nearer and nearer, as by concentric circles, to regions where our personal interests are more closely concerned. For the Church of our Dominion, now happily welded together in spiritual unity, for the recovery and return of the venerable Prelate who so worthily holds the Primacy of all Canada, our heartiest prayers ascend. So also for our Diocese, our Bishop, our Ministers, and all our people. And lastly, it is for the Church in this city of Loyalists, it is for the admirable institution whose anniversary service is celebrated, that I invite your prayers. Our minds with one impulse turn to the memory of the Institute's founder, that remarkable man who has left his monument in this splendid edifice, and in the society he founded to consolidate the Church's work in this city. Little more than three years have passed since he entered into rest, and we can realize in truer perspective now the real force of one who was indeed a devoted pastor, a sound scholar, an accurate theologian, and a typical English gentleman. I am sure that he would welcome the recent energy which has enlarged the orbit of the work, while maintaining its principles.

This Institute unites the best forces of the city, and is therefore the corrective of any tendency to mere parochialism. It receives the willing aid of the best workers in every parish for its multifarious

agencies. It promotes mental cultivation, it helps our poorer parishes, it signifies our unity in faith, practice, and aspiration. For this our Institute, then, for all the embodiment of Christ's Church on earth, we have to pray. It is a great, an awe-inspiring vista, to contemplate the vastness of the Society of God in all its forms. Here in our congregation, in our Canadian Church so recently assembled, in the great Congress of the Church of England, even now in session, in the full union of the Anglican Communion with our sister Church in the United States — what a great company ! But these are not all : for our definition, in its last expression, knows of no national limits. Our narrower patriotism is forgotten when we think of that greater assembly — “*The general assembly and Church of the first born.*”

That will be the final hope, when all our differences are resolved, all our divisions forgotten ; when the great multitude, which no man can number, is gathered before the throne. One quality, one qualification, is theirs : “*they have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.*” That is the end and object of all churches upon earth, to help us so to pass through this troublesome world, that finally we fail not of the everlasting reward.

APPENDIX.

The Bidding Prayer.

The 55th Canon of 1604 furnishes the Form of Prayer to be used (*imitanda*) by all Preachers before their sermons (*in concionum ingressu*). This Canon is observed still in Cathedral pulpits, and at the University Sermons at Oxford and Cambridge. It appears not only to authorize special prayer before the Sermon, but it contains the only explicit definition of the term "Holy Catholic Church" in the Anglican formularies.

"Before (*in aditu*) all Sermons, Lectures, and Homilies, the Preachers and Ministers shall move the people to join with them in Prayer in this form, or to this effect, as briefly as conveniently (*summaria brevitare quantum licet*) they may: "Ye shall pray (*precamini*) for Christ's Holy Catholic Church, that is, for the whole congregation (*universo coetu*) of Christian people dispersed (*diffusi et disseminati*) throughout the whole world, and especially for the Churches of England, Scotland and Ireland *; and herein I require you most especially to pray for the King's most excellent Majesty, our Sovereign Lord, JAMES, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland; Defender of the Faith, and Supreme

* At Exeter and other Cathedrals, also in the University pulpit, Cambridge, the words are: "especially for that pure and reformed part of it established in these realms."

Governor in these his realms, and all other his Dominions and Countries, over all persons in all causes, as well Ecclesiastical as Temporal. Ye shall also pray for our gracious Queen ANNE, the noble Prince Henry, and the rest of the King's and Queen's royal issue; ye shall also pray for the Ministers of God's holy Word and Sacraments, as well Archbishops and Bishops, as other Pastors and Curates (and herein especially for ———, Lord Archbishop of this Province, and for ———, Lord Bishop of this Diocese).

Ye shall also pray for the King's most honorable Council, and for all the Nobility and Magistrates of this Realm; that all and every of these, in their several callings, may serve truly and faithfully (*diligenter et fideliter*) to the glory of God, and the edifying and well governing of His people, remembering the account that they must make before the judgment seat of Christ (*cum ad Christi tribunal sistentur judicandi*); also ye shall pray for the whole Commons (*populo et plebe universa*) of this realm, that they may live in the true faith and fear of God, in humble obedience to (*sancto timore*) the King, and brotherly charity one to another. Finally, let us praise God for all those which are departed out of this life in the faith of Christ, and pray unto God that we may have grace to direct our lives after their good example; that, this life ended, we may be made

partakers with them of the glorious Resurrection in the life everlasting :

Our Father, etc.

This Canon is founded upon the Form in the Royal Injunctions of 1559, § LIII., which was an expansion of the Form in the Injunctions of 1547, § 36, one still older being retained, with the omission of the Pope's name. "No prayer to be used after the Sermon in the pulpit, but the Sermon to be concluded with 'Glory be to the Father,' and so come down from the pulpit." (Wren's Articles, 1636.) There are many local variations in the use of this Prayer, of which the most usual is the insertion of a suffrage on behalf of "all Seminaries of sound learning and religious instruction, especially our Universities." At Oxford and Cambridge the preacher adds: "and, as in private duty bound, I desire your prayers for the ancient and learned foundation of ——— College."



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